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1955



Louisiana

CONSERVATIONIST

ROBERT F. KENNON
Governor of Louisiana



L. D. YOUNG, JR.
Director

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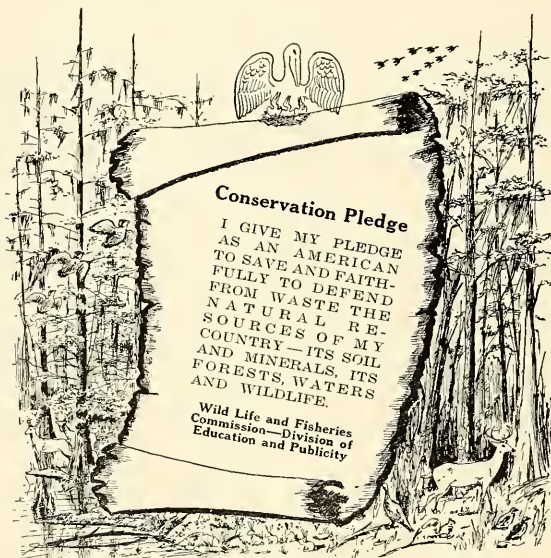
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JOHN BLANCHARD
Editor

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Message from the Director...

IN THIS ISSUE

GENTLEMAN BIRD by W. McFadden Duff	2
RADIO NETWORK	4
SOIL CONSERVATION AIDS LOUISIANA WILDLIFE by H. B. Martin	5
FISH CONSERVATION FUNDA- MENTALS—PART IV by Dr. R. W. Eschmeyer	8
WE RECOMMEND: LOUISIANA BIRDS	9
SQUIRREL RESEARCH by J. B. Kidd	10
WILDLIFE RANGERS AT WORK	12-13

DEPARTMENTS

Message From the Director	1
Action of the Commission	16
Speak Your Piece	17
With the Federation	19
Upstream Casts	Inside Back Cover



L. D. Young, Jr.
Director

Louisiana
Wild Life and Fisheries Commission

Since the invention of firearms some men have been handling guns virtually every day of their lives without accident or tragedy; others have caused tragedies and even death. The gun has been the same: The difference has been in the handling. Many men handle a gun with the respect it deserves; others treat a loaded gun with a carelessness that often results in their own untimely end or the death of a friend or companion.

An unloaded gun is nothing more than an artistically designed and expertly assembled instrument, no more lethal than any ornament. Load it and you have an instrument of death.

Last year improperly handled loaded guns caused the death of six hunters in Louisiana. Thus far this year, since the opening of the hunting season two more fatalities have been added to list. And that's only Louisiana's toll: For the nation the death toll will run into the hundreds, deaths due entirely to carelessness on the part of someone with a loaded gun in his hands.

There may be some who will argue that this is a small percentage of the many millions of men and women, boys and girls who join the nimrod army for sports afield, but it is a percentage that shouldn't be. It is a percentage created solely by thoughtless disregard of oft repeated rules for the safe handling of firearms.

What good are lessons and lectures if you forget these teachings the minute you get a gun in your hands? What good is your gun to you if you use it to end your own life or that of your companion accidentally? Where is the sportsmanship of which you prate if you constantly endanger the lives of those around you by mishandling your own gun?

The rules for safe handling of guns are simple. An unloaded gun never discharges while you're climbing over or through a fence; always remove the shells from your gun when you get to your car or boat; never mix alcohol with gunpowder; keep your safety on 'til you're ready to shoot. Learning to use your safety device is as important as keeping the brakes on your car in good repair. You'll be much happier if you miss a deer, squirrel, rabbit or quail than if you hit a person by accident. Never point your gun at something unless you want to shoot it. You may save a life by following these rules—perhaps your own!

COVER: Time out to light a cigarette and who's looking? Perhaps this is why we still have plenty of bushytails.

—Photo by Jack Britt.

B
I
R
D

by W. McFadden Duffy

Photos by Author
(unless otherwise credited)

A fine mist began falling as we left the fence-row bordering the pasture and made our way toward a small patch of cover where the pointers had birds nailed down.

It was the sort of rain that collected in tiny, almost microscopic jewels on a battered felt hat and left a thin wet film on a leather jacket. An occasional gust of wind sprinkled it lightly, yet coldly, on our faces. The mid-morning air had a wet, wintry bite and behind the light rainfall was the threat of cold weather. The wind was shifting from the south and it was a fair guess that the bite would be a blast by nightfall. A cold front moving down from north Louisiana was expected to pass over the area that day or the next. Tugging gusts which whipped the cold mist into our faces indicated the cold front might be moving faster than predicted.

Grateful for the exercise that eased the damp chilly sting that had come over us riding in the jeep, we walked quickly up to the crouching dogs. We moved quietly up through the wet knee-high grass and spread out behind the pointers. The two hunters moved forward. Paul Kalman and I followed, protecting our cameras as best we could from the gust-whipped drizzle.

Jack, Fairchild's big illegitimate pointer, was fixed as solidly as if he had been carved from stone.

He had won first place as a shooting dog in the Louisiana field trials two years before. Jack wasn't a pretty pointer and he didn't have papers but his uncertain ancestry must have been good. When it came to locating birds he found them if they were around. Jack was wet and the big pads on his feet were caked with mud. A few cockleburs stuck to his coat. A blizzard wouldn't have bothered him. Jack was on birds. The other pointer which belonged to a friend of George Connell's was backing Jack. It was strung out in that beautiful half-crouch, muscles quivering like a weight-lifter's do when he strains at a heavy bar.

"Let's see what we got here, Cotton," murmured George Connell as the two hunters moved into the patch of cover.

"Sure glad they ain't woods birds," drawled Fairchild as he thumbed the safety off his automatic shotgun.

Suddenly the briar patch erupted like a grenade going off, only throwing quail in every direction instead of metal. The hunters swung their guns and when the shooting ended there were three birds down. Jack and the other pointer moved out on command and brought the quail in.

"I figured maybe we could find this covey back here," said Connell. "They've been using this pasture for several years. I put them up early this spring when I was back here tending a sick steer. If that rain holds off a few minutes maybe we ought to take another single or two. They're pretty thick," he added, "and this is probably the last time I'll be back here this year."



—Photo by Blanchard

Four in a row.

"I'm sure glad those danged birds hadn't taken to the woods," drawled Fairchild. "Those wood birds have darn near driven me crazy this year. Use to be I knew where a covey might be. But this year lots of them are in the woods."

I was curious about Fairchild's reference to woods birds so I asked him what he meant.

"They're quail that have taken to the woods," he replied. "They're wild and they won't hold under the dawgs. They run through the danged woods and the dawgs go pussyfooting behind them. Craziest thing I ever saw and it's getting worse all the time."

Fairchild and Connell explained that some of the field covies had taken to woods-dwelling. There were lots of possible explanations for the change in habitat. Maybe too much moving in some sections had pushed them out of the fields. Maybe they'd taken to the woods in search of food. At any rate, a lot of bird hunters in Louisiana were complaining about the difficulty in getting a shot at the eccentric quail.

They pocketed their quail and reloaded and I glanced at the leaden sky. It couldn't have been much worse for photography. I glanced over at Paul Kalman and shook my head. Kalman is outdoors editor of the New Orleans Item and has a weekly hunting and fishing television show. He wanted to get some movies of a quail hunt. I was carrying my camera, too, with the hope of getting some still shots of Fairchild and Connell in action.

"If we can just get a single or two I'll have enough for a show," said Kalman. "I've got enough film for five or six minutes. I'd like to have it fill eight minutes of the show." He glanced at the sky, then back at me. "If it gets to raining any harder," he added, "I'll have to get this movie camera under cover."

Fairchild grunted and whistled at the pointers. He waved them off to a clump of brush about a hundred and fifty yards away. The quail had flushed wildly, then most of them swept down into the brush in a long graceful glide that is always deceptive and longer than it seems. The dogs moved out quickly, running with their heads down and pausing here and there to question scent. We started off behind them.



George Connell listens to his partner, "Cotton" Fairchild, who explains the craftiness of quail.

We crossed the field toward the cover, wading through grass that reached to our thighs and swept against us like wet brushes. I cupped one palm over the lens hood of my camera to protect it from the swirling mist and trailed along with Kalman. It was dismal weather and the fields which were usually beautiful that time of year with lush green grass and brown frost-burned shrubbery were bleak and desolate. I glanced at the sky again and watched three pintails rise from the direction of Thompson Creek and go zipping across the pasture climbing for altitude all the way. We all heard the whistling backwash of their powerful wings. Connell laughed.

"Anybody with sense ought to be out duck shooting today," he commented, loud enough for us to hear. "In about twenty minutes this is going to be duck weather for sure."

Connell was probably right, but when a man gets quail on his mind maybe he doesn't have good sense. It had been that way with Kalman and me. We'd

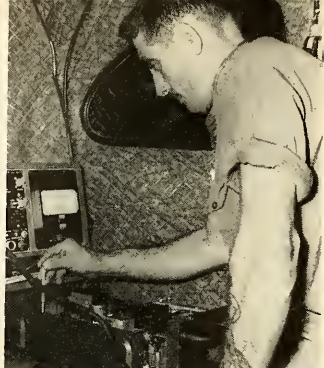
(Continued on Page 14)



A broom sedge field yields a covey of the "Gentlemen Birds."



Pilot Nat Pedro uses radio in one of Commission's amphibious planes.



Clarence Guidroz, radio technician, checks two-way set in airplane.



Guidroz ties in the tower at Pass-a-Loutre.

R A D I O



One of Commission's mobile units showing decal and radio antenna.

With ideas in mind to "provide instant communications with men in the field, aid in the apprehension of game and fish law violators, to save approximately five cents per mile in automobile usage and to cut down long distance telephone expenses," the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission is setting up its own two-way radio communications system on a statewide basis.

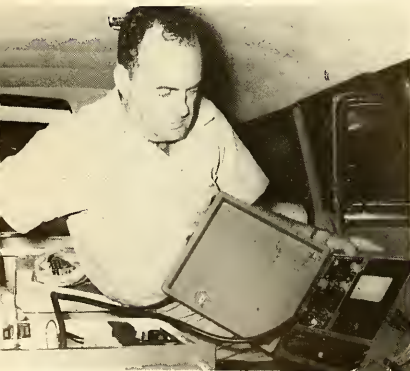
Currently being installed, the system will cost in the aggregate of \$116,306.80 for the installation of radios in 96 mobile units, 17 boats, four airplanes and 20 base stations, along with two repeater towers. In operation at this time are 50 mobile units, eight bases, three planes and nine boats. The system will be complete, with walkie-talkies, not later than January 1, 1956.

The system is being set up under the direction of Arthur P. Kay, Jr., experienced radio technician (26 years), who came with the Commission March 1 of this year. He is being aided by Clarence Guidroz, radio technician and former ranger, and temporarily by Jack Foster.

Three-hundred-foot towers will be constructed in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Rockefeller, Fulton (near Lake Charles), Alexandria, Minden and Monroe. Towers 140 feet high will be placed at Hammond, Red Dirt, Ferriday, Houma or Morgan City, Opelousas, Abbeville, and automatic repeaters at Winnfield and Cottonport. Already in operation are 140-footers at Grand Pass, Bay Gardene, Pass-a-Loutre, Sister Lake, Marsh Island, Redfish Point (State Wildlife Refuge) and Sabine Pass.

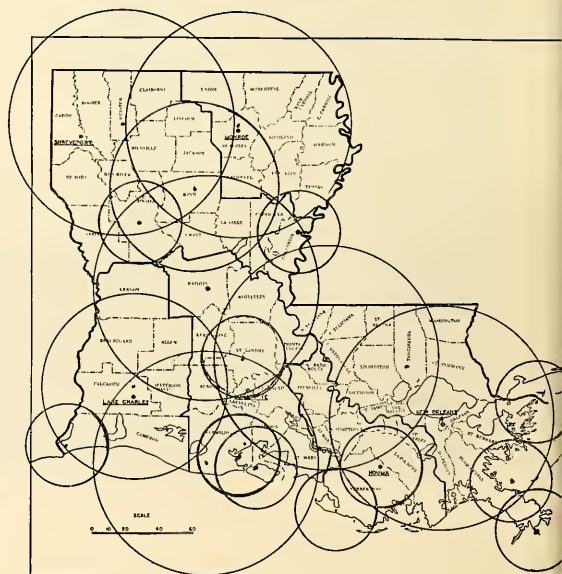
NETWORK

Photos by Jack Britt



Chief Radio Engineer Arthur P. Kay, Jr., tunes set in mobile unit.

Map shows statewide coverage with 250-watt and 60-watt stations throughout Louisiana. 300-foot towers represented by larger circles.

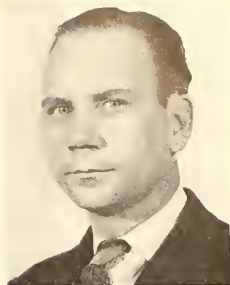


SOIL CONSERVATION

Aids Louisiana Wildlife

by H. B. Martin,

State Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service
(Soil Conservation Service Photos)



The Author

Is soil and water conservation an ally and benefactor of fish and wildlife conservation as we have often proclaimed? Or is its far-reaching program doing unreasonable damage to wildlife in marshes, swamps and other wetlands where drainage, irrigation reservoirs, rice fields and improved pastures are replacing natural habitats?

The Soil Conservation Service unquestionably recognizes wildlife and fish as desirable products of farm and ranch-owned lands and waters. It is our policy to help landowners plan beneficial practices for various forms of wildlife. Most of our Service assistance is given in accordance with the written plans and objectives set forth by Louisiana's soil conservation districts. Every one of the 26 districts has adopted the objective, "to encourage and help conserve and increase fish and wildlife on the farms of cooperators." We adhere to these policies with honesty and persistence.

The subject cannot be understood very clearly if we discuss it only in general terms. The Soil Conservation Service has no desire to weigh good fishponds, silt and flood prevention, and upland game habitat against drainage, pasture development, and so forth in order to strike a favorable balance for wildlife. We consider the problems of each piece of

wetland solely on its own characteristics, as we do woodland, cropland and pasture.

The Soil Conservation Service and Louisiana soil conservation districts are agricultural agencies. We assist groups of farmers and individual landowners with their own particular problems of land use, including the safe and profitable use of all their water and soil resources. The Service technician counsels; he never dictates. Each farmer has his own ideas and goals. He asks questions about the land management practices he has heard of, read about, or seen. The Soil Conservation Service technician explains the possibilities of various land uses, including fish and wildlife, pasture, crops, etc. He conscientiously informs the landowner regarding the cost of development, the problems of maintenance and the reasonable yields to be expected. The farmer decides what plans he wants to carry out, and the technician writes the decisions into a "conservation farm plan" to be carried out under an orderly schedule.

Definite standards, based upon research and the practical experience of farmers and technicians in the locality, are the foundation for the land treatment recommended. The Soil Conservation Service maintains a technical staff which formulates these standards. This staff includes: soil conservationists,



Level ditching in sawgrass marsh made with marsh buggy. Improves area for wildlife and makes it more accessible for trappers. Note plug into walkway to hold water in marsh.



Good cropland in cultivation, but too wet for good crops, too dry for ducks or fish. This is typical of most drainage being done with Soil Conservation assistance.



Woodland management is now underway on 1,500,000 acres. The Soil Conservation Service recommends leaving mast-bearing trees along streams and open areas. The crop tree harvesting principle opens up areas which create more browse and cover.



Louisiana now has 12,250 ponds constructed on district cooperators' farms. Many are used for waterfowl. Most are being fertilized and managed for fish production.



Odd areas usually found on farms are best suited for wildlife. Bicolor has been planted on this border strip between field and woods for game food and cover. There are 28,000 acres on farms now being managed thus.

soil scientists, agronomists, biologists, engineers, foresters, and range conservationists. These men not only develop standards but also provide specific technical services within their fields of specialization. If the farmer wants help with his croplands, Service technicians provide the necessary help. If he wants help with pasture or range, that type of assistance is given. Likewise, if he wants to use his land for furbearers, waterfowl, or other kinds of wildlife, the Soil Conservation Service gives him the technical assistance he needs.

In Louisiana, the Soil Conservation Service has assisted 33,150 farmers in developing and applying farm conservation plans on 7,099,000 acres. These conservation practices include revegetation of seriously eroded cropland to trees or grass, conservation crop rotations on cropland including cover crops, development of improved pasture, woodland improvement, construction of ponds, irrigation systems, and drainage.

Why do farmers drain land? Farmers drain land for an easily understandable reason. They know or believe that it is a profitable thing to do. Farming is a business in which people engage for profit. Farmers are no different from other businessmen in that few of them are satisfied with a bare subsistence.

They, too, want the satisfactions that a profitable business brings. Farmers do not drain land to get rid of waterfowl. If homes for waterfowl are damaged by drainage, it is unintentional.

The Soil Conservation Service made a state-wide survey in 1948 to determine the total area suitable for drainage. By suitable for drainage, we mean that it is feasible to drain from an engineering standpoint, the soil is suitable for crop production, and that suitable outlets are available. On this basis, approximately 5,344,000 acres were found suitable for drainage in the state. We also found that there were 10,700,000 acres that were not feasible or suitable to drain for crop production. These include backwater areas, other areas subject to flooding, areas where the soils are not suitable, and nearly 4,000,000 acres in marshland. Approximately 958,000 acres of on-the-farm drainage has been completed to date on soil conservation district cooperators' farms, mostly outside marsh area.

The policy of the Soil Conservation Service and of the soil conservation districts is to assist primarily in the drainage of lands already in production.

The Soil Conservation technicians have been commendably successful in persuading landowners to



Open pits along cattle walkways create open water and "edges."



Good range management practices on marsh range are beneficial to geese and in some instances to furbearers.



Bass weighing one and one-half pounds were caught from this 22-acre pond 15 months in construction near Mansfield. Ducks seem to like it, too.

avoid the unwise development of wetlands which cannot be expected to provide sound economic returns. For example, in the Louisiana marshlands landowners have requested the Soil Conservation Service to assist in draining 24,127 acres of marshland. After making necessary surveys on suitability of the land for various purposes, technical assistance was given in draining 4,450 acres. In every case wildlife values are pointed out for the landowner to consider along with crop values. Individual farmers went ahead and drained 1,760 additional acres on their own after being refused Soil Conservation Service technical assistance because the lands were not considered suitable for drainage. Of the 17,917 acres not drained a small percentage was suitable for cropland, but most of it was not. The landowners decided, however, not to drain this land but to use it for wildlife or range.

Marion Monk, President of the Louisiana Association of Soil Conservation District Supervisors, claims that the program of soil conservation districts improves more than it harms habitat for wildlife; the objective of soil conservation districts coincides with the objective of wildlife conservation.

In the marsh area there are several hundred thousand acres of marsh range where the landowners are cooperating with the soil conservation district to improve or maintain natural range, plant, soil and water resources. A part of this marshland improvement has involved the construction of approximately 60 miles of cattle walkways. Cattle walkways are earth levees constructed from ridges into range areas to improve accessibility and encourage uniform use. They serve as trails, bed ground, calving locations, and a resting-place for young calves while mothers graze. Borrow pits resulting from walkway construction are staggered from side to side of the levee at intervals of several hundred feet. These staggered pits prevent the flow of water off the

range and are effective fire breaks. Preliminary observations indicate that walkways improve wildlife habitat. They provide an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of open water area per mile of walkway. Mottled ducks have been seen nesting along walkway pits in range areas that are rested from grazing during summer months. Mink and otter have been seen along the levees. Where walkways have been built on range land producing muskrats, landowners believe that cattle damage muskrat mounds less than usual. Young calves often bed on the muskrat mounds but prefer the firm and more accessible walkways when they are available.

The February 1954 issue of *Sports Afield* contained a statement to the effect that the Soil Conservation Service program of using native vegetation for grazing in the marshland actually improves conditions for wildlife.

Privately owned lands support the vast bulk of huntable game. They also feed and shelter the many kinds of birds which endear themselves to mankind mainly by their colorful beauty, inimitable songs, and the probable good they do by feeding on insects, weed seeds, and other troublesome or unused resources.

The lands and waters which now support our wildlife can produce larger populations by the manipulation of soil and water. Fish in farmponds, quail and rabbits are species which agriculture is able to favor. When newly developing technology reaches maturity, we expect man's culture of soil and water to feed and shelter wild ducks, geese and deer better than nature alone can do.

The mere fact that the Soil Conservation Service "recognizes wildlife values in land use planning" does not assure accomplished progress on the land. The attitude of each technician toward wildlife and the agricultural outdoors is also a significant influence, for we Americans are individuals, too. Ninety-eight per cent of our field technicians who work on the land with farmers in Louisiana hunt, fish, or have outdoor wildlife interests. Surely these men are not biased against wildlife and the habitat our wild creatures must have on Louisiana farmland!

Many acres of Louisiana marsh and prairies have been converted from their natural condition to rice fields, pastures and reservoirs. It begins to appear that the changed habitat is better than ever for geese and ducks. It can be improved still further by increasing the acreage of water in reservoirs, a current trend in soil conservation districts. The winter flooding of riceland for duck hunting, food for production, and rice-weed control gains in favor.

In this vast scheme of Louisiana's resources, $2\frac{1}{2}$ million people of varied interests must be served now, and increasing populations will swell their demands for every good thing we want. The soil conservation program has improved conditions for wildlife in the state. It will become even more favor-

able for wildlife if all the people will support a conservation program based on using our land and water resources in keeping with their ability to produce those things they are best suited to produce.

FISH CONSERVATION FUNDAMENTALS

By Dr. R. W. Eschmeyer

The Work Unit Conservationist in your area is:

Name	Location	Address
Paul D. Landry.....	Abbeville.....	P. O. Box 68
Guy R. Jones.....	Alexandria.....	P. O. Box 827
G. H. Mixon.....	Amite.....	P. O. Box 695
James Crawford.....	Arcadia.....	
George Montgomery.....	Bastrop.....	P. O. Box 431
Ellis Dawson.....	Baton Rouge.....	304 North Blvd.
Joel B. Slack.....	Benton.....	P. O. Box 175
S. B. Gauthier.....	Breaux Bridge.....	
A. R. Cain.....	Clinton.....	P. O. Box 517
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Part IV

To thrive, fish need water. This was the extent of our thinking some decades ago insofar as habitat is concerned. Now we fully realize that there are other habitat needs. The fish must have proper water temperatures and the waters must be suitable chemically. Food must be available in suitable amounts. Spawning facilities must be present if we expect to have natural propagation. Some species do not remain in an area unless they have places where they can hide.

Each species has its own environmental needs. These must be recognized if our habitat programs are to be effective. Unfortunately for many species, we still don't have as complete a picture of these needs as we should have.

In laying out our streams and lakes, Mother Nature showed no particular interest in supplying all the needs of the creatures which would inhabit the waters. But the species themselves, over long periods of time, became adjusted to the situation or disappeared. Consequently, desirable species of one kind or another were adapted to most of our waters when settlement began. Though there are instances where we can improve on the habitat which Nature provided, most of our environmental improvement work is really *restoration*—correcting deficiencies which we, ourselves, created in the fish habitat.

(Continued on Page 16)



Paul D. (Dud) Faulk (left), International Duck Calling Champion, and his father, Clarence F. Faulk, call manufacturers of Lake Charles, represented Louisiana at the recent World Champion Goose Calling Contest in Missouri Valley, Iowa. The senior Faulk won first place (trophy in photo), and Dud placed third in the contest.

We Recommend:

LOUISIANA BIRDS

A new and different kind of bird book, "Louisiana Birds", by Dr. George H. Lowery, Jr., published October 2 for the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, will provide bird lovers, naturalists and sportsmen with an authoritative book on Louisiana's profuse bird life.

In "Louisiana Birds", Dr. Lowery has written a guide to the sport and science of bird study, presented from the regional point of view. Throughout the text, emphasis is placed on those characteristics by which a bird may be recognized in the wild.

Each species of bird ever found in Louisiana is discussed in a separate account. Gone are the formalized headings such as "Status", "Description" and "Distribution" that make such accounts hard to read.

Instead, these accounts are woven into informal treatments steeped in the atmosphere of the Bayou State. Numerous photographs scattered throughout the book not only illustrate the text but capture the charm of outdoor Louisiana and the beauty of birds in natural settings.

The following section heads, selected at random, indicate the range of interest of the book: "How to Identify Birds"; "Attracting Birds"; "Migration"; "The Bird Skeleton"; "Feathers, Plumage and Molt"; "Economic Value of Birds", and "Ornithological Societies and Bird Clubs".

Lavishly illustrated, "Louisiana Birds" treats of over 377 species with 13 full-page, four-color plates; 27 full-page, 2-color plates; 69 photographs (bird portraits); 14 full-page habitat photographs; 135 text illustrations, and 12 graphs showing seasonal distribution of 34 species.

A resident artist, Robert E. Tucker, has portrayed every one of the 377 species recorded in Louisiana in half-tones, line drawings, or water colors. For identification purposes, similar species are grouped together in tested guide-book style, permitting quick comparison.

As a place to see birds, Louisiana ranks among the top five states in the nation. Possibly the greatest single factor favoring the state as a place to find so many species is its geographical location.

It lies athwart the great Mississippi Valley flyway, over which millions of birds wing their way twice a year on their annual migrations. This mass movement of a large part of the continent's avian population brings to the state in winter many northern species in incredible numbers.

Louisiana also receives in seasons of migration nearly all of the species of the eastern United



Author George H. Lowery, Jr.

States and, at the same time, a strong representation of western birds because of its strategic east-west location.

To the task of writing "Louisiana Birds", Dr. Lowery brought unique qualifications. A native of Louisiana, he has been studying birds since boyhood, and a quarter-century of field work has given him an intimate acquaintance with bird life in every parish of the state.

One of the country's leading ornithologists and the author of over 40 scientific papers relating to the classification and distribution of birds and mammals and to the mechanics of bird migration, Dr. Lowery is Professor of Zoology and Director of the Museum of Natural History at Louisiana State University.

"Louisiana Birds", 594 pages long and popularly priced at \$5.00, is being published for the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission by the Louisiana State University Press. Orders should be addressed to the University Press, LSU, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. ★



—Photo by Britt
George H. Lowery, Jr., author of LOUISIANA BIRDS, hands the first copy of the Commission's publication to A. C. (Pops) Glassell (right), chairman, Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, as Don E. Ellegood, director of the University Press, L.S.U., looks on.



—Photo by Britt

SQUIRREL RESEARCH

by J. B. Kidd

Supervisor, District VI.

bag checks indicated that the squirrel population was lower during the 1953-54 season than the 1954-55 season, there was still ample breeding stock after the poor season to produce a good crop of squirrels for the following season. This indicates that the squirrel, under proper conditions, is a prolific animal and can reproduce itself in great numbers.

And now, what are these proper conditions to produce a maximum harvest of squirrels? It is generally believed, and has been pointed out in other studies, that the mast crop for one year usually determines the abundance of squirrels the following year. In other words, a good mast crop one year means a good squirrel population the following year. According to acorn mast studies conducted in this state since 1950, the 1952 season was a poor mast year when compared with the two previous years, which could account for the low squirrel hunter success during the 1953-54 season. The mast crop in 1953 was much greater than that of the '52 season, which could account for the increased squirrel hunter success during the 1954-55 season.

An estimate of the total kill is also presented here. From questionnaires mailed to hunters it was learned that 62.33 percent of the license

In July, 1953 a research project on squirrels was initiated in this state and set up under the Pittman-Robertson section of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission. The purpose of this study is to gather accurate information which will aid in the proper management and harvest of squirrels.

Generally speaking, this project is concerned with four jobs: (1) hunter bag checks in the field, (2) gathering information on breeding, age and sex ratios, (3) trapping and tagging, and (4) squirrel censuses.

One of the best tools of game management is the hunter bag check in the field. In most cases, this is the "sure fire" method of measuring your annual production. Good hunter success usually means good breeding success. During the 1953-54 hunting season, 1,352 hunter bag checks were made in the field. The average kill per hunting effort for the entire state was 1.9 squirrels (or if you don't like fractions, for every 10 individual hunts made, 19 squirrels were killed). Whether this is average or below average for this state is not known, since this was the first time this kind of work has ever been conducted.

During the 1954-55 season, 5,868 bag checks were made, and this average also was 1.9 squirrels bagged. However, more than half of these hunter bag checks were made inside game management areas that were opened for the first time to hunting. Hunters naturally flocked into these areas, and as a result of the excessive gunning pressure, the kill figure was low. In sections of the state outside the game management areas that were subject to normal gunning pressure, the average kill per hunting effort was 2.7. This figure is believed to be the statewide average and, as it clearly indicates, success was much greater during the 1954-55 season than during the '53-54 season. One thing more should be pointed out here. Although the hunter



—Photo by Britt

This scene has been repeated almost daily since the squirrel season opened October 1. That's the reason we still have plenty of the bushytails.

holders were squirrel hunters and that each hunter went hunting during the season an average of 6.46 times. Through the following calculation the total annual kill has been determined: Licensed squirrel hunters for the 1953-54 season (154,888) multiplied by the average number of times each went hunting (6.46) multiplied by average 1953-54 kill (1.9) equals 1,901,294 squirrels bagged during this season.

The number of license holders for the 1954-55 season is not known at the writing of this article, but one can easily see that with an increase average hunt from 1.9 to 2.7, the figure will run well over 2,000,000 squirrels killed during the 1954-55 season.

It should be pointed out again that these total kill figures are estimates based on the most accurate knowledge that we now have at hand.

The sex ratios were determined from the squirrels handled during this study. It is believed that for a normal, healthy population of squirrels a 50:50 ratio should exist between males and females. From examining 5,386 fox squirrels and 6,260 gray squirrels, it was revealed that 53 percent of the fox squirrels were males and 52 percent of the grays were males. The reason for this slight discrepancy between male and female is not known, but it is not believed great enough to be detrimental to the total population.

Another good indication of success in the production of game species is the age ratios. A pre-



—Photo by Rozas

A little gray pauses, readying himself for the getaway.

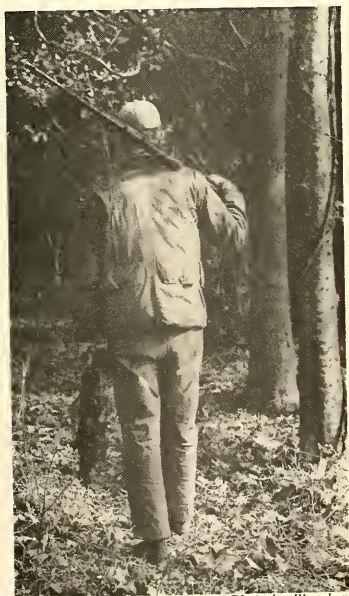
ponderance of juveniles in the bag means a successful breeding year. During the '53-54 season, 975 fox squirrels were examined and the adult-juvenile ratio was found to be 53:47. During the '54-55 season the fox squirrel ratios were 70 percent adults, 30 percent juveniles (4055 animals examined), and the gray squirrel ratios were 61 percent adults, 39 percent juveniles (5085 animals examined).

During both years it is noted that an excess of adults seems to exist. Whether or not this is the true picture is not known, as the ageing technique could be subject to error. It is extremely difficult to distinguish those juveniles which are born in the spring from adults. By the time the hunting season opened in October, squirrels that were born in February and March had had six to seven months in which to grow, and it is possible that their mature body weight could have been reached by that time. It is believed that the ageing technique will improve as more animals are handled and the study progresses.

Prior to the beginning of this study only a limited amount of squirrel work was carried on in this state, consisting mainly of trapping and tagging. Including this pre-study work which was conducted in 1952, a total of 768 animals have been trapped, tagged and released.

From trapping and tagging, it is hoped to learn something about gunning pressure and population

(Continued on Page 21)



—Photo by Blanchard

A rifle and a scope beat the state average—1.6 squirrels per hunter per day.

It's their Duty...

WILDLIFE RANGERS AT WORK

Photos by Jack Britt
(unless otherwise credited)



Joe Billiot (now a captain) takes the duty oath from Notary Charlie Palermo.



Ranger Louis Leleux checks a trapper's license in the marsh.

Ranger Arthur McCue takes hunter bad check. (Upper Center).



Ranger Norman Bollin on duty in the swamp country.



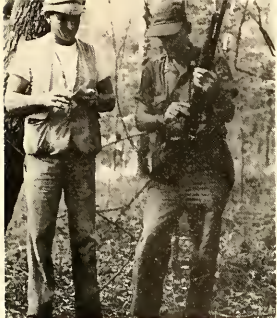
Ranger Peter Rau and Capt. Harry Reno after night hunters.



Ranger Bob Anderson serves as lookout while Ranger Charles Harris operates the outboard during a routine patrol.

Ranger William Tyler and Capt. Dewey Farrar examine confiscated shocking machines.





A hunter is checked for proper gun plug.



Chief Pilot John Ellington and Ranger Peter Rau unload shrimp trawl from one of the amphibious aircraft following an apprehension made in the coastal area.

—Photo by Blanchard



Judge William J. O'Hara listens to testimony from Ranger Arthur McCue.



Ranger Paul Danove weighs shrimp in the French Market for proper weight (must be not less than 68 to the pound).



Capt. Albert Tullier uses new two-way mobile unit radio.



Rangers get ready for raid on poachers.



Capt. Leonard New checks hunters for license on dove hunt.



McCue, Billiot and Major Marion Solito examine snagline and catch.



—Photo by Gresham

Up in the deer country, Ranger Rheo Stewart makes patrol on horseback.

—Photo by Gresham



GENTLEMAN BIRD

(Continued from Page 3)

had coffee together one day and the talk had come around to quail.

"I've got to get something for next week's show," Kalman said. "The duck season's about over. I've been duck hunting and had movies about it. I've had goose shooting, too. Covered the works so far from cottontails to Canadas. This 52-weeks-a-year-outdoor-show-business is rough. The hunting season's just about wound up and it's too miserable to go fishing. Got any ideas?"

"How 'bout quail?" I countered. "Had a quail show?"

A big grin spread over his face. In an instant he was enthusiastic. We called Connell.

"The weather's threatening," he told us. "Had two days' rain early in the week, then it warmed up. If it changes again we'll have more rain. But come on up. We'll take a stab at it."

It had been fairly clear when we left New Orleans the following morning. A big warm mass of air had moved in from the Gulf of Mexico and the weather had been downright balmy for a few days. It's always that way in the winter when the Gulf pushes in warm air. Then when a cold front moves down it pushes the warm air out. Violent thunderstorms and rain move with the cold front and it plays hob with hunting and fishing.

By the time we covered the hundred-odd miles between New Orleans and George Connell's place it was plain that the weather was a toss-up. We might get a quail hunt and then again we might not.

George Connell and Cotton Fairchild were waiting for us in Connell's big farm kitchen. They were drinking coffee and the dogs were already in the two jeeps. There were five dogs in all. The two big pointers and three young dogs that Connell wanted to run with the experienced ones. We gulped down some coffee while Connell told us the sad facts.

"Like I told you," he said, "this weather is due for another change. We had a lot of rain a few days ago

and it looks like we're going to have more. A little rain is a good thing, but if it pours like it did early this week, every bird for miles around is going to be bedded down in briars and brush that even a fox couldn't nose through."

We finished our coffee impatiently and hurried out to the jeeps. Kalman rode with Fairchild and I climbed in with George Connell. We lost little time in heading for a big tract of land south of Jackson, Louisiana, which Connell owns. It's principally pasture land but the fence-rows are heavy and it hadn't been mowed recently. The land was sprinkled with sparse wood lots and as Louisiana goes it was top quail country.

Before long we swung off the gravel road and pulled up at a gate leading into Connell's tract. I jumped out and opened the gate so the jeeps could pass through. They pulled to a stop about fifty yards from the gate near an old deserted farm house. When I walked over, the others were unloading. Suddenly I heard the bellowing of cattle and about fifty steers came trotting up.

"Only bad thing about hunting quail from a jeep in cattle country," murmured Connell. "I use it most of the year to pull the feed wagon and when the steers hear the jeep they come running. They put up enough rumpus to flush every covey of birds for a mile around."

Fairchild and Connell are both cattlemen as well as quail hunters. They've learned how to make pasture land pay off in birds as well as beef, a trick which southern cattlemen will all have to learn if they plan to have good quail shooting in the years ahead.

It was sheer bedlam with the steers crowding around bellowing for extra rations. Connell suggested that we temporarily leave the jeep until the cattle went away.

"Let's work the fence-row on foot and then when the steers take off we can come back, get one of the jeeps and slip off. Once they find there's no meal I think they'll leave us alone," he said.

The idea of being followed by fifty or more bellowing steers wasn't appealing so we turned the point-



Nothing like a little hot coffee on a blustery day afield.

ers loose. The two older dogs made off quickly, ranging up the fence-row. The puppies trailed behind, pausing here and there to question scent and glancing back at us now and then to make sure we were following.

It was a good suggestion. Within fifteen minutes the big pointers found birds. The quail were in the fence-row and the pointers had them pinned down as neat as could be. Fairchild called out to steady them and to caution the younger dogs.

"Steady, Jack . . . steady, boy . . . steady . . . whoa, you puppies . . . whoa now."

The young dogs crouched down but couldn't stay put. They fidgeted and crept forward and both Connell and Fairchild bellowed at them to stay put.

"That's the trouble with puppies," growled Fairchild. "They get a sniff of quail and they act like kids at a family reunion—running all over the place and acting silly."

Connell and Fairchild moved in quickly, still cautioning the younger dogs. The covey flushed with wildly stroking wings and both men fired. Two birds went down.

"Dead, Jack . . . dade . . . dade . . . day-ed," Cotton called. The two big dogs moved out and each found a bird. The puppies raced around excitedly and followed the older dogs in with the birds. They jumped and sniffed at Fairchild's game pocket.

"Wasn't too much of a covey," murmured Connell, "but I think it can stand another single. I'll see what those puppies can do on a single and then we'll get back to the jeep."

He glanced at the bleak, slate-gray sky and shook his head.

"Better tie those puppies in one of the jeeps after this and leave them," he said. "This weather won't hold out long and we'd better not fool around training dogs."

The pointers had hunted in front of jeeps a great deal and as soon as they saw we were mechanized they fanned out and ranged much farther ahead. Fairchild and Connell yelled at them to direct them and occasionally they blew a whistle when one of the dogs ranged too far afield. The pointers responded readily to signaling and we moved across the fields, the dogs methodically working the brush and cover we passed, eager to wind birds.

The breeze began to pick up a bit and the air was growing increasingly damp and cold. It wouldn't take a man with rheumatism to know that it was going to be pretty nasty soon. We lurched along in the jeep keeping an eye on the dogs. Finally we came to some real birdy-looking country. Connell stopped the jeep.

"There ought to be birds back there," he said. "Let's get out on foot and put the dogs through that cover."

We all agreed that the place looked likely and piled out of the jeep. It was a spot where the pasture melted into grown-up brush and small trees. Fair-

child whistled the dogs in and sent them into the likely looking places. We followed.

In a few minutes the dogs were on birds again and Connell moved in to put them up. Fairchild stayed a little to one side in case the covey rose toward the field. Connell walked in to flush the birds. They rose and swept toward Fairchild. Connell dropped one of them and Fairchild connected twice. The dogs brought them in quickly. It hadn't been a large covey so we didn't molest it further. Instead we returned to the jeep and broke out a thermos of hot coffee. The wind was colder now and we knew the weather was changing faster than expected.

After the coffee break we loaded back into the jeep and Fairchild whooped the dogs out in front to range. We followed them in four wheel drive, with the sturdy little jeep bucking and lurching through the unmowed fields. Occasionally Connell would swing to one side or another to avoid a stump or a ditch but we managed to keep up with the dogs and whistled and whooped them in the right direction.

We found another covey about a mile farther toward the back of Connell's place. It was turning colder so fast that we donned coats and jackets when we left the jeep to walk up the birds.

The dogs had them pinned down in some spotty cover in a broom sedge field and they flushed wildly in the gusty wind. Each of the guns scored a single and the dogs fetched the birds.

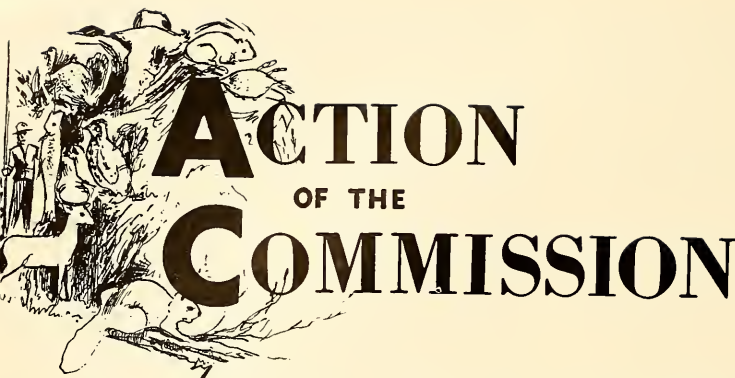
We could hear the distant booming of thunder when we located the last covey. It rolled across the lead-colored sky threateningly and when we started walking toward the spot where the covey seemed to light there was a crack of lightning and a bright, blinding flash.

I took out a handkerchief to wipe my camera lens and while I was busy removing rain flecks I heard Kalman's movie camera start grinding. I glanced up to see Connell drop a single. Then there was a flash of lightning—much closer this time.

"We better get out of here," said Connell as I walked up. "Unless you fellows want to really get wet, we'd better get going."

Rain was pelting down in big gloppy drops on the canvas top of the jeep. The windshield wiper was going full blast.

"Those birds hardly ever let a man down when he kinda takes a little care of them," said Fairchild. "I've never heard anyone cuss a quail. Quail keep banker's hours and a man could hunt them all his life and never miss breakfast. You'd almost swear those birds do their best to make a dawg show up good. Even when they take to the woods, they're not real bad. That quail is. . ." Fairchild hesitated, groping for a word. The rain sloshed down in sheets. "That quail is . . . a gentleman bird," he said. We all lapsed into silence, pondering his modest but sage appraisal of nature's cheery little whistler. ★



AUGUST 23, 1955 MEETING

Director Young was authorized to sell surplus parts for the Seabee airplane and to proceed with the conversion of one of the Widgeon planes at a cost of \$38,000 to \$40,000.

The lease of University Lake, Baton Rouge, from L.S.U. was returned with a request that the following changes be made—that the lease be for a minimum of 50 years; that the exact land along margin specified be more accurately identified; that structures developed to enhance fishing, such as wharfs, etc., should not be removed just because lease expires; that the Commission have authority to develop fishing even to the extent of leasing bait and boat concessions, if deemed necessary.

Southeastern Louisiana Institute was given authority to locate a proper site on State Wildlife Refuge for a biological camp.

Director Young was authorized to accept the bid of F. and F. Material and Con-

struction Co. of New Iberia, in the amount of \$29,675, for the construction of the Marsh Island headquarters building.

The Commission voted the following regulations concerning the printing of the book, *Louisiana Birds*: Selling price \$5 per copy, 2,500 copies being printed in excess of the 5,000 stipulated in contract to be sold through regular bookstore outlets, and that a royalty of 10 percent of the net income be paid to the author, Dr. George Lowery, on all copies sold in excess of 5,000.

An application by the Stevens Co. to dredge shells from Grand Lake and Calcasieu Lake was approved.

A special bow and arrow season on deer in the Catahoula Game Management area December 1 through December 15 was approved.

The area known as Turnbull Island in West Feliciana Parish was opened to deer hunting December 1 through January 1.

A squirrel season, October 1-15, on the following game management areas was ap-

proved (no dogs allowed and hunting by permit only): West Bay in Allen Parish, Thistlethwaite in St. Landry, Livingston in Livingston, Jackson-Bienville in Jackson and Bienville, Union No. 1 in Union, Red Dirt in Natchitoches, Evangeline in Rapides and Sabine Nos. 1 and 2 in Sabine. A season on quail on Red Dirt was approved, from December 10 through December 24.

A request from the Morehouse Parish Police Jury to restrict commercial fishing in Irvin Lake and Old Bayou Bartholomew was denied.

The Commission approved a lease by the Lake Bistineau Fish and Game Commission to the State Parks Commission of certain lands along Lake Bistineau, in Webster Parish, for development as a recreational area.

The board voted to go ahead with plans to place a siphon under Humble Canal on Rockefeller Refuge with the Commission bearing all the expense.

The Shell Oil Co. was denied a request to construct facilities in the vicinity of Joseph Harbor on Rockefeller Refuge.

Trapping seasons for 1955-56 as presented by Ted O'Neil, Chief, Fur and Refuge Division, were approved (see page 24, October, 1955 issue of CONSERVATIONIST).

Director Young was authorized to advertise for bids for digging a water well on State Wildlife Refuge.

A total of 640.2 acres of land was leased from the Iberia Parish School Board for a period of 10 years (with an option to renew for 10 years) at a cost of \$750 per year for trapping furbearing animals, management and control of migratory waterfowl, fur research development, and as a fur and game sanctuary.

The request of Claude H. Gresham, Jr., editor of the CONSERVATIONIST, for a year's leave of absence was approved. ★

FISHING FUNDAMENTALS

(Continued from Page 8)

HABITAT DESTRUCTION

The extensive destruction of fish habitat by man's activities need hardly be mentioned—we're all aware of it.

As an example, a survey made by the Soil Conservation Service in Whitewater River watershed in Minnesota indicates that originally this watershed had 150 miles of good trout stream. By 1941, as a result of poor land management and erosion, the watershed had only 60 miles of trout streams and this mileage was in poor condition.

Pollution, as well as siltation, is a major destroyer of fish habitat. Many a stream or lake is no longer suitable for fishing because of the discharge of untreated or inadequately treated domestic or industrial wastes.

RESTORATION IS POSSIBLE

We now have good examples of habitat restoration. An excellent one is in the Clark National For-

est in Missouri, where the Forest Service is gradually converting the watersheds back to their original conditions insofar as siltation and in-soak are concerned.

According to a report in the Forest Service files, a half of this forest area can now take heavy rains up to two inches directly into the soil, without run-off. In this area many streams and springs have returned to permanent flow, instead of being intermittent. The streams are now referred to as "milky," not "muddy," following heavy rains. During a recent dry summer the flow at one point in the Current River was 1600 cfs, as compared to 1250 cfs in the less severe droughts of 1934 and 1936. Plant and animal life in the streams is in much greater evidence now than in 1936. Fishing has improved, and on several of the waters is reported as the best in the memory of the present generation of anglers.

STREAM IMPROVEMENT

In those remaining instances where man has not tinkered with the watersheds, habitat improvement



FORESTRY PEOPLE INDIGNANT

New Orleans

I have read with the usual interest the *Speak Your Piece* column in the September CONSERVATIONIST and am prompted to comment on a portion of the letter submitted by Mr. Alden T. Shotwell, Jr., of Monroe, on the drainage situation. Part of the letter reads as follows: "If Congress continues to appropriate funds to drain our swamps and other natural reservoirs and to permit the timber interests to denude the lands, north Louisiana will be just like the state of Texas; we will have nothing but dust storms and droughts."

The portion to which I refer is that which says "... and to permit the timber interests to denude the land ..."

Mr. Shotwell is probably aware of the advances made by forest industries in north Louisiana, and all of the state, and has perhaps momentarily overlooked them in his well-founded concern over the water problem.

I should like to offer a few notations which I hope will provide some clarification,

for water is important to the timber (and paper) interests as well as to the trappers, fishermen and planters.

Louisiana's forests are growing faster than they are being harvested. Louisiana's forest industries have been responsible for planting approximately one-half of the forest plantations in the state. There are approximately 160 technical foresters employed by timber (and paper and other forest industry) interests in the state—plus about 20 self-employed consulting foresters. They are all aiming at the same goal: optimum reforestation of the state. They are planting and managing, not denuding. They are fighting costly fires, too often set, which scar, kill and denude.

These same forest-industry interests have enormous sums of money invested in businesses which they hope to operate year after year. Denuding the land of timber would be the surest, quickest way to wipe out these investments, the future, and a high percent of jobs now held by gainfully employed workers in Louisiana.

—Herbert G. Lambert, Jr., Secretary
Louisiana Forest Industries Committee

We are well aware of the job being done by the Louisiana Forestry Association, the Louisiana Forestry Commission, by individuals and timber companies. We know that the big lumber companies provide many hundreds of thousands of acres for public shooting, and the sportsmen of the state should be thankful for their assistance.

Our wildlife people do have one objection, though, and that is to the girdling of hardwood trees which are excellent den trees for squirrels.

—Ed.

New Orleans

In the September issue of the CONSERVATIONIST, there appears a letter to the editor by Alden Shotwell, Jr., in which he states, "If Congress continues to appropriate funds to drain our swamps and other natural reservoirs and to permit the timber interests to denude the lands, north Louisiana will be just like the state of Texas; we will have nothing but dust storms and drought." In commenting on this letter, the editor advises Mr. Shotwell to keep himself as well informed on all matters pertaining to drainage and river basin work as possible. It is obvious that Mr. Shotwell is uninformed concerning timber management on industrial holdings in north Louisiana. I certainly agree that we should spread knowledge, but first let us be certain that we have accurate facts.

A recent forest survey shows that Louisiana is growing much more timber than is being harvested. Industrial forest holdings in north Louisiana contain some of the

is usually *not* needed. Here, except in arid and semi-arid regions, the stream flow tends to be relatively constant because of permanent flow of springs. Gravel riffles and deep pools are generally available, and there are plenty of hiding places for fish.

This observation gives us an important clue with respect to proper stream management. It's pretty much a matter of watershed use. Where the soil is kept on the land, through proper land use, and where a substantial part of the rainfall soaks into the ground to appear later as cool spring water, a stream will usually restore itself—provided livestock is fenced out.

Where we have heavy siltation because of poor farming, improper forest use, over-grazing or faulty road building, and where we have excessive run-off, resulting in high waters at times and little or no flow at other times, the use of stream improvement structures is of little or no value.

There are numerous instances where stream improvement structures such as V-dams, covers, deflectors, etc., are helpful. There are also many instances where these artificial improvements don't

justify the costs involved, either because they are not needed or because they do nothing to correct the basic problem of siltation or highly irregular stream fluctuation. Too, some amateur attempts at stream improvement may actually do more harm than good.

Before stream improvement (by installing devices) is attempted, the situation should preferably be studied carefully by someone familiar with fish needs and with water-flow and siltation problems.

We are not trying to minimize the value of stream improvement devices. We are implying that where such devices seem to be badly needed, the basic trouble usually lies in the watershed, not in the stream bed itself. We can channel silt downstream, but this is not a good substitute for preventing its entrance into the stream in the first place. We can create pools in streams which have very low water stages, but that's no substitute for the rapid and constant flow of springs resulting from having much of our rain soak into the soil. We can remove obstructions to migrations of anadromous fishes, but no amount

(Continued on Page 23)

finest examples of forest management in the world.

The forest products industries are aware of the need for game and recreation. The Southern Pine Association Forest Policy Statement reads in part, "The soil and watershed values of forest land should be recognized and protected. Recreational, scenic and other uses have economic as well as public values and should be considered in management of all forest lands." We must keep in mind that the forest products industries purchased these forest lands, paid taxes on them, and protected them in order to assure a continuous source of raw material to supply their manufacturing facilities, in which one out of every three wage earners in Louisiana gains a livelihood.

Instead of unwarranted criticism, we hope for closer cooperation and understanding between sportsmen and forest land-owners.

—V. W. Cothen, Forester
Southern Pine Association

We are sure that Mr. Shotwell does not mean to single out the entire area of north Louisiana. Northeast Louisiana has been gutted by drainage, but we know of nothing but an intense interest in conservation by the timber company in that area. Construction companies have hampered wildlife habitat in that area.

We agree with you that the forestry holdings in north Louisiana contain some of the finest examples of forestry management in the nation, and we are further aware that the timber companies have provided great tracts of land for public hunting.

We meant no unwarranted criticism in publishing Mr. Shotwell's letter and are always interested in hearing both sides of the question.

—Ed.

* * * *

SEAWEEDS FOR CRABS

Shreveport

In the September issue under *Speak Your Piece* I noticed an item with the caption, "Is A Dead Crab Edible?"

Why let them die, even if they are salt water crabs? Just for one instance, we got two bushels of crabs—big old bluepoints—on a weekend at the coast. We were 300 miles away from home, and I did so want to have fresh crabs for a meal at home. So, being Irish, I devised a method and it worked 99 44/100 percent. I put a layer of wet seaweeds in the bottom of the basket, then a layer of crabs, then a layer of wet seaweeds and so forth until I had the basket packed full. The crabs were in the baskets for the whole 300-mile trip, and we arrived home about 7:00 p.m., so I just put the baskets out of the car for the night. Was amazed to find only one dead crab out of two bushels the next morning.

Hope this will inspire more people to take some of their catch home after this.

—Mrs. E. E. McGilvray

ARCHERS ONLY

Brooklyn, New York

Kindly send us information on laws pertaining to hunting with a bow and arrow.

—Crestwood Mfg. Co.

Hunting with a bow and arrow is legal in Louisiana for all game animals.

—Ed.

* * * *

ANOTHER MADE HAPPY

Waycross, Ga.

I have just received my first copy of the CONSERVATIONIST, and after reading through it I am well pleased.

I was very much impressed when I read the article on seafood canning. I have often wondered how it would be possible to shuck enough oysters for commercial use by hand. It's all very interesting, and thank you very much for the paper.

—H. S. Barber

* * * *

MOVING DUCKS

Marksville

Is it legal to hunt with mechanical decoys in our state? I understand that a variety of these mechanical decoys will be on sale in Louisiana, and before I purchase one, I wish to find out if they are legal.

The mechanical type I have reference to is operated by batteries with wires attached to the "block" leading to the blind, where contact of wires gives movement to the decoy installed out in the water in front of the blind.

—Curry J. Lacour

To my knowledge there is no law prohibiting the use of a mechanical decoy on migratory waterfowl. I don't think it is encouraged by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but it has not been made illegal to date.

—Ed.

—James T. Elliott

MORE WATER SPORTS

Shreveport

I was interested in the recent *Speak Your Piece* item on water hazards and water sports.

I believe that our City Council is finally waking up, through the efforts of the Caddo Wildlife Federation and other sports organizations, to the prospects of water sports on Cross Lake.

First, the lake is large enough, and for a reasonable sum could be made safe enough, for water skiers.

Secondly, water sports would create a financial boom for the landing owners and merchants of Shreveport. Such an attraction would be instrumental in bringing to the city people who would otherwise go to pipe-studded Caddo Lake, or to Lake Bistineau, where skiing can be done only in the channels which are already filled with countless numbers of fishermen pursuing their favorite sport. It would also tend to prevent skiers and fishermen from using the same area at the same time.

I venture to say that if a modern beach and restricted swimming area were provided on Cross Lake, either by the city or through private financing, it would be patronized all year round by a multitude of people from Shreveport and the Ark-La-Tex area.

It is my opinion that Shreveport could be made the sportsmen's paradise of north Louisiana if Cross Lake were opened to water sports, and I feel confident that should it be put to a vote of the young sportsmen of Shreveport, we would have a swimming and water sports program on Cross Lake.

MANCHAC

By HAZEL B. RASMUSSEN

To cross the Pass there's a wooden bridge,
No sign of a mountain, no sign of a ridge,
Just water as far as the eye can see,
And gulls swooping down to an old, worn quay.
For miles you have travelled the thick morass
Through forests of cypress and cat o'nine grass;
So turned to your thoughts is the bracken scheme,
This sudden transition will seem like a dream,
A breathless unfolding of water and sky,
With nothing but silence, except for the cry
Of a ravenous gull circling down from afar
O'er the still, tranquil surface of Lake Maurepas.
Along past the bridge, running flush with the road,
Side by side, lies a row of small fishing abodes
Where men, by their instincts, have studied the ways
Of the long, winding bayous' impenetrable maze;
Of men who know well every curve and crevasse
In the waters that stem from the deep-flowing Pass;
Who pilot their boats through the moss-hung terrain,
From Maurepas' shores to old Lake Pontchartrain.
A break in the wildwood, a crossroad of life,
A merging of waters where beauty is rife,
The cry of a gull swooping down to a quay,
An old wooden bridge, and the sweep of the sea.



Chas. W. Bosch, Jr.

Executive Secretary
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

with the FEDERATION

THE PRO AND CON OF FIREARMS REGISTRATION

I. The Affirmative

(a) *Reasons advanced for such an ordinance*

- (1) To reduce crime by making it more difficult for undesirables to obtain weapons.
- (2) To assist in solving crimes by making it possible to trace the weapons used.
- (3) To aid in the apprehension of criminals by making it possible to arrest persons found in possession of unregistered weapons.
- (4) To keep guns out of the hands of minors, mental incompetents, drug addicts, habitual drunkards, etc.
- (5) To help return lost or stolen weapons to their lawful owners.

(b) *Principal argument in reply to objections by reputable citizens*

- (1) "You don't object to registering your automobile; why do you object to registering your gun?"

II. The Negative

(1) Registration laws make it more difficult for *honest* citizens to obtain arms for recreation and personal defense. They do not appreciably increase the difficulties encountered by a criminal in obtaining weapons. As in the case of automobiles, most of the weapons used by criminals are stolen guns. In May, 1941, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that "between January 1, 1933, and December 31, 1938, there were 493 robberies from Government Armories". The number of *weapons* stolen was not reported but in October, 1937, Attorney General Cummings said that 2,047 guns and 273,326 rounds of ammunition had been stolen from Government Armories "since January 1, 1933". On February 4, 1944 the F.B.I. reported the theft of 83 revolvers from one shipment on an Army pier in Brooklyn. These are random extracts from

official reports. They do not begin to indicate the total number of guns stolen from Government and police armories. When U.S. Government and police arsenals furnish such a ready source of weapons to criminals, how will registration seriously interfere with the criminal's source of supply for the weapons he wants?

(2) The above facts indicate the fallacy of the statement that gun registration will help in solving crimes by tracing the weapon used. Since the guns were stolen in the first place, the trail can only lead back to the Government arsenal, the police department or the honest citizen from whom the weapons were stolen. A citizen who has been away on a business or vacation trip may have his home burglarized and his registered gun stolen. Later that night it may be used in a holdup and left at the scene of the crime. When the citizen returns home he will be met by a police delegation demanding that he establish an alibi to prove that *he* was not the holdup man!

(3) No one familiar with the law in America can take seriously the claim that firearms registration will aid in the apprehension of criminals by making it possible to arrest persons found in possession of unregistered guns. In the first place, American police have no authority to stop people on the street and "frisk" them or to search homes without a warrant. If an officer has legal reason to arrest a person or to search a home he has enough evidence to warrant arrest on some charge more serious than possession of an unregistered weapon. The penalties for murder, manslaughter, felonious assault, burglary, robbery and similar crimes are far heavier than the penalties which can be imposed under a firearms registration law. If the police enforce existing laws the firearms registration law becomes a weak secondary charge convenient for trading with the criminal but otherwise a useless appendage to already overburdened statute books.

(4) Firearms registration will not keep guns out of the hands of minors, mental incompetents, drug addicts or similar undesirables any more effectively than a simple statute (already in effect in most states) prohibiting the possession of guns by such persons or the sale or transfer of guns to such persons.

(5) Firearms registration might help return a few guns annually to their rightful owners. However, at the present time such guns are returned to their owners whenever they are found in pawnshops or elsewhere by the police. Registration would add little to the effectiveness of the present procedure.

(6) The record is clear—firearms registration laws even on a national and state basis have had no effect in reducing crime. *The proponents of such legislation are asked to point out where in criminal statistics they find any reason to believe that a firearms registration ordinance will lessen criminal activities in their city or state.* Since such laws have been ineffective on a statewide basis it is obvious that they would be useless when limited to the city limits.

(7) As to the argument that "you don't object to registering your automobile; why object to registering your gun?", this is a "smoothy". In the first place, the registration of an automobile is automatic. The police register the car, the city and state collect their taxes and no one questions the right of the citizen to own the car. *The whole essence of gun registration is to permit the police to say WHO may own a gun!* The difference is obvious and vital!

In the second place, the defense of a man's home, of his wife and children, of his own life is unaffected by whether or not he owns a car. The ownership of a gun and knowledge of its proper use enable the honest man to defend those things which are his and which often mean more to him than life itself. The right to self protection is a right which no official should be privileged to take from a reputable American citizen.

Registration of an automobile and registration of a gun are definitely NOT in the same category.

(8) Basically the only reason for registering privately owned firearms is to make it possible for the political authorities, through the police whom they control, to seize such weapons when, in the opinion of those authorities, such seizure is necessary or desirable. Proponents of firearms registration always deny any such intention. Usually their denial is sincere. "All we want to know is *who* has guns and what kind." In the next breath, they admit that they do not expect criminals to register their guns.

Now, if the criminals are not going to register their weapons, the registration list will contain the names and addresses *only of reputable, law-abiding citizens* who will use their guns only for recreation or in the defense of their homes and property. Such a registration list can be of no use to the authorities unless they wish, at some time and for some reason of their own choosing, to seize those weapons or to assess additional taxes which can be so burdensome as to cause the reputable citizens to get rid of their arms. Thus, guns will be left only in the hands of the crooks on the one hand and the politically controlled police on the other hand.

When all the rhetorical trimmings are stripped from the proposition, this is what stands as the only practical effect of the gun registration theory.

When Homer Cummings was United States Attorney General he was the outstanding proponent of universal firearms registration. In a speech before the International Association of Chiefs of Police at Baltimore, Maryland, on October 5, 1937, Mr. Cummings said: "The criminal's arsenal is today made up not only of pistols and revolvers but of ordinary shotguns and rifles. I am convinced of this: Any practical measure for the control of firearms must at least contain provision for the registration of all firearms. A review of the laws of the principal countries of the world reveals that America is far behind in her solution of the problem. Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands are typical of the countries which, in recent years, enacted comprehensive firearms laws, each requiring extensive records of manufacture, sale and individual registration. *I do not suggest that registration will disarm the criminal*, but I do say that it is the *first step* in the control of the firearms traffic." The underlines are ours. What, we wonder, is the second step?

At the time of the then Attorney General's speech Franco had embarked on his campaign to establish a Fascist government in Spain aided by both Hitler and Mussolini. Certainly, Spain had a firearms registration law!

Within six months of that speech Hitler moved into Austria—and the Austrian fire-

arms registration lists furnished the Gestapo and native Fifth Column with invaluable information as to which Austrians' homes must first be violated and searched and which Austrians must first be placed under military guard! Within two years the Gestapo was in Poland, and within thirty months Norway and Denmark were under the invaders' heel. The firearms registration lists did a wonderful service for the Nazi hordes! Then France, Belgium, the Netherlands—always the story was the same—a people practically disarmed by their own police and politicians and with convenient lists of the few remaining firearms owners in the files at every City Hall. Yes, all the countries listed did have firearms registration laws in 1937! But would the Attorney General have wished to be reminded of the effect of those laws by 1940?

And what of England? Her National Firearms Act went into effect in 1921. It was the law most often mentioned as a desirable model for America. By 1939 the British firearms manufacturing industry had "dried up" and the number of gun owners in Britain had decreased to such an extent that when the German armies faced England across the Channel, "lawless" America must needs draw on its own war reserve to furnish the British Army with rifles, and an officially sanctioned campaign was conducted in the United States

to secure the donation of shotguns, rifles, pistols, revolvers, *any* kind of weapons to arm British police and civilians! Yes, Britain had a "model" firearms law when the Attorney General spoke in October, 1937! Would he have cared to mention it to an American audience in October of 1940?

In summary: (1) A firearms registration law does not disarm the criminal, and its honest proponents do not claim that it will.

(2) Such a law does discourage the ownership of firearms by reputable citizens by imposing inconveniences, extra taxes and contacts with the police which the average person prefers to avoid.

(3) By drying up the market, such a law forces reputable firearms manufacturers into other businesses, thereby accelerating the disarmament cycle.

(4) Regardless of the good intentions of some proponents, the only practical effect of a firearms registration law is to play into the hands of unscrupulous seekers for political power, to encourage bootlegging, to disarm reputable citizens and thereby to encourage the depredations of the criminal element adding to the work of the police.

(5) No dictatorship has ever been imposed on a nation of free men who have not been first required to register their privately owned weapons.

The Gardens of Lafourche

By HAZEL B. RASMUSSEN

Fifty miles more or less from New Orleans,
Through land Old Man River has built,
Where cane grows as thick as a forest,
And cypress trees sprawl in the silt,
You will come to Lafourche, a long bayou,
Winding lazily down to the sea,
Where men have laid miniature gardens,
Unmatched in unique husbandry.
For the banks rise from out the dark water,
In patches, so steep and so small,
That you wonder how man does his ploughing,
Yet ploughing he does, spring and fall;
And he hoes and he sows and he coddles,
No task too unwieldy to shirk;
And these Fourchins put magic in planting,
With pride in each day's handiwork.
But what a reward for their labor!
Luscious peas clinging tight in the shell,
Sturdy beans hanging thick to the column,
And corn, garden's tall sentinel.
Green onions, tomatoes and garlic
The delight of gourmand and gourmet,
With okra for thick, steaming gumbo,
All in succulent, tempting array.
When a man here sits down at his table
To food he has raised from the sod,
He may well give a prayer of Thanksgiving
For strength and the goodness of God.
And the bayou that once was so vital
Moves on without rage or caprice,
Lending beauty to each tiny garden
Through soft-shadowed vistas of peace.

SQUIRREL RESEARCH

(Continued from Page 11)

turnovers. For example, if a hundred squirrels are tagged and released in the area where they are trapped, then these animals are subject to the same gunning pressure as the untrapped animals in this area. If 10 of these tagged animals are shot by hunters during the season, it is reasonable to assume that only 10 percent of the total population in that area is being harvested by the hunters. This would indicate that the population is not being over-shot and that ample breeding stock has been left for the following season. On the other hand, if the figure is too high—say 80 to 90 percent—the harvest is too great, and some measure that would reduce the kill should be employed to insure good hunting from year to year.

Of the 768 squirrels trapped during this study, only 35 have been returned by hunters. However, this does not relate the true picture of gunning pressure, as all of the areas where trapping was done have not been open to hunting.

On the Evangeline and Catahoula Game Management areas and in Concordia Parish, 350 squirrels were tagged and 29 returns were made by hunters who hunted these areas during the '54-55 season. These figures indicate that only eight percent of the squirrels were harvested by hunters in those areas. However, it is believed that, due to unavoidable errors, this figure is lower than it should be. No doubt some of the tagged squirrels which were killed were not returned, and it is a known fact from retrapping that some squirrels will scratch the tag out of the ear to which it is attached. But even with these errors taken into consideration, the figures still indicate that the hunter harvest is not great enough to hurt the breeding stock for the following season. It is also realized that many more animals will have to be trapped and tagged in order to establish a figure that will accurately reveal the gunning pressure in the state.

Other returns came from animals that were trapped inside game management areas but moved over the boundary to areas that were open to hunting. It is interesting to note here the distances (see table) that some of these squirrels traveled. Normally, the range of a squirrel is within one mile. These returns could indicate a food shortage as a result of overpopulation or a poor mast crop in the locality.

Retrapping data is also valuable. Let's suppose that on an unshot area, one hundred squirrels are tagged and released during the year. If the same area is trapped the following year and only 60 squirrels are retrapped, then it can be assumed that 40 percent of the population is being replaced by new animals each year.

At this time our retrapping is not adequate enough to establish figures on population turnovers,

but from the limited amount of work that has been done, data collected points toward a high figure (see table).

Throughout the state there are 14 study areas, 20 acres in size, where squirrel censuses are being conducted for the purpose of learning something about the density of squirrels in this state. The result of these census figures indicate that there is

Table I
Squirrel Hunter Bag Check Data—1953-54 Hunting Season

Parish	No. Hunters Checked	% Still Hunters	% Dog Hunters	No. Squirrels Killed		Average Kill Per Hunting Effort
				Fox	Gray	
Union.....	17	89	11	14	2	.9
Morehouse.....	11	100	0	8	0	.7
Livingston.....	8	0	100	4	4	1.0
St. Landry.....	14	100	0	26	26	3.7
West Baton Rouge.....	5	100	0	2	0	.4
Natchitoches.....	73	99	1	56	58	1.6
Beauregard.....	42	99	1	33	22	1.3
Iberville.....	22	100	0	28	4	1.5
East Feliciana.....	2	100	0	2	0	1.0
East Baton Rouge.....	34	100	0	4	29	.9
Onatchita.....	108	75	25	37	3	.4
Grant.....	197	100	0	307	316	3.1
Caldwell.....	15	80	20	46	2	3.2
Tangipahoa.....	1	100	0	0	7	7.0
Winn.....	14	50	50	15	6	1.5
Concordia.....	618	95	5	843	120	1.6
Pointe Coupee.....	86	100	0	150	139	3.3
Rapides.....	75	95	5	109	62	2.3
Madison.....	10	90	10	8	7	1.5
Statewide.....	1352	95	5	1692	807	1.9

Table II
Squirrel Hunter Bag Check Data—1954-55 Hunting Season

Parish	No. Hunters Checked	% Still Hunters	% Dog Hunters	No. Squirrels Killed			Average Kill Per Hunting Effort
				Fox	Gray	Unknown*	
Union.....	82	99	1	113	35	6	1.9
Morehouse.....	129	100	0	193	51	0	1.9
Livingston.....	864	100	0	229	1777	11	2.3
St. Landry.....	85	100	0	145	112	17	3.2
Beauregard.....							
Allen.....	22	82	18	12	7	0	.8
Iberville.....	10	100	0	30	7	0	3.7
Ouachita.....	312	99	1	574	83	0	2.1
Grant-Winn.....	2400	100	0	1257	2595	26	1.7
Concordia.....	674	99	1	1547	252	430	3.3
Pointe Coupee.....	23	100	0	56	51	0	4.7
Rapides.....	876	99	1	874	1	0	.9
Jackson.....							
Bienville.....	132	98	2	238	266	0	4.9
Webster.....	21	81	19	12	39	0	2.4
Richland.....	27	100	0	39	3	0	1.6
Boesier.....	203	95	5	74	107	0	.9
Vernon.....	13	60	40	8	7	0	1.2
Statewide.....	5868	98	2	5395	5486	490	1.9

*Squirrels were skinned in the woods.

Hunters checked Inside Game Mgt. Area=3,996
No. Squirrels Killed=6,416 } Subject to
Average Kill per hunting effort=1.6 } excessive gunning pressure.

Hunters checked in areas Outside the Game Mgt. Area=1,872
No. Squirrels Killed=4,955 } Subject to
Average Kill per hunting effort=2.7 } normal gunning pressure.

one squirrel for every six or seven acres of squirrel habitat. The highest number of squirrels found on any of these study areas was one squirrel per acre. This particular area is located in a hardwood creek bottom in central Louisiana.

The above facts and figures are the most outstanding discoveries this study has revealed. With the continuation of the study, it is believed that still more data will be gathered that will enable better squirrel management. It is also hoped that this article will be informative to the sportsman—familiarizing him with the research techniques employed, the manner in which data is gathered and the way this data is applied to sound management

Table III

Returns Showing the Time Elapsed Between Capture, Recovery and the Distance Travelled

Locality	Tag No.	Date Tagged	Date Killed	Time Elapsed	Distance Travelled
Evangeline Game Mgt. Area.....	403	4/ 8/52	10/ 8/54	2 yrs. 6 mos.	Local
	477	4/30/53	10/ 7/54	1 yr. 6 mos.	Local
	941	9/22/54	10/ 4/54	12 days	Local
	681	10/ 6/53	10/ 3/54	1 yr. 1 mo. 4 days	Local
	467	4/ 9/53	10/ 3/54	1 yr. 6 mos. 24 days	Local
	492	8/26/53	10/ 3/54	1 yr. 1 mo. 8 days	Local
	939	9/15/54	10/ 3/54	18 days	Local
	476	4/17/53	10/ 2/54	1 yr. 5 mos. 15 days	Local
	450	12/ 9/52	10/ 2/54	1 yr. 9 mos. 24 days	Local
	438	1/ 9/52	10/ 2/54	2 yrs. 8 mos. 22 days	Local
	694	2/ 9/53	10/ 2/54	1 yr. 1 mo. 22 days	Local
	464	4/ 1/53	10/ 2/54	1 yr. 6 mos.	Local
	683	Last of '53	10/ 1/54	About 1 yr.	Local
	478	4/30/53	10/ 1/54	1 yr. 5 mos. 1 day	Local
	435	1/ 6/52	10/ 1/54	2 yrs. 8 mos. 26 days	Local
	459	3/13/53	10/ 1/54	1 yr. 6 mos. 19 days	Local
	462	3/18/53	10/ 1/54	1 yr. 6 mos. 14 days	Local
	928	5/17/54	10/ 1/54	4 mos. 15 days	Local
	693	Feb., '54	10/ 1/54	About 8 mos.	Local
Catahoula Game Mgt. Area.....	497	9/10/53	10/ 1/54	1 yr. 21 days	Local
	920	Apr., '54	10/ 7/54	About 6 mos.	Local
	927	5/14/54	10/ 2/54	4 mos. 19 days	Local
	696	5/ 7/54	10/ 9/54	5 mos. 2 days	Local
	486	Oct., '53	10/23/53	About 1 mo.	Local
	449	12/ 5/52	10/24/54	10 mos. 20 days	7 to 8 miles from site.
					2 miles from site.
	830	5/20/54	10/17/54	4 mos. 28 days	Local
	1049	7/14/54	Oct., '54	App. 3 mos.	Local
	1077	8/20/54	Oct., '54	App. 1 mo. 11 ds.	Local
Concordia Parish.....	1030	6/22/54	Oct., '54	App. 3½ mos.	Local
	624	5/23/53	Dec., '53	App. 6 mos. 8 days	Local
	183	2/21/52	Nov., '52	App. 9 mos.	Local
West Bay Game Mgt. Area.....	1758	6/ 5/54	Oct., '54	3 mos. 26 days	2 miles S. of site.
	1756	6/ 4/54	Oct., '54	App. 3 mos. 27 days	9 miles S. of site.
	28	3/17/54	Oct., '54	App. 6 mos. 15 days	4 miles N. of site.
	1424	7/ 2/54	Oct., '54	App. 3 mos.	4 miles E. of site.
	29	3/16/54	Oct., '54	App. 6 mos. 16 days	2 miles N. of site.

practices that will someday result in better hunting.

Table IV
Squirrel Trapping and Returns
1952-55

Locality	No. Trapped and Tagged	No. Retraps	No. of Returns (Shot by hunter)	Hunting Status
Evangeline Game Mgt. Area.....	110	22	25	Open to hunting
Concordia Parish.....	36	7	3	Open to hunting
West Bay Game Mgt. Area.....	239	98	5	Closed to hunting
Catahoula Game Mgt. Area.....	204	42	1	Open to hunting
Union Game Mgt. Area.....	101	26	1	Closed to hunting
Caldwell Game Mgt. Area.....	20	0	0	Closed to hunting
Jackson-Bienville Game Mgt. Area.....	58	2	0	Closed to hunting
Total.....	768	197	35	

EFFECT OF OIL

Do you remember the last time you filled your outboard motor with gasoline and some of it slopped over the side into the water? You immediately saw a rapidly spreading iridescent film over the water's surface, and perhaps you thought, "Well, it will just keep on spreading out and finally disappear." You were right.

There are four important reasons why the oil and gas you spilled disappeared from the surface of the water. Reason one: Some of the particles get washed on sticks or logs or on the shore. Reason two: That part of the oil which is water soluble is actually absorbed by the water. Reason three: Volatile components escape into the atmosphere. Reason four: Some of the oil is absorbed by silt particles and carried to the bottom.

Don't be upset over that pint you spilled, though: The part that was absorbed by the water and the part that was carried to the bottom was too small an amount to cause any damage to aquatic organisms. Do be upset over the barrels of oil that escape from oil fields, tankers and barges. This wasted oil affects aquatic life by *smothering*—oil particles absorbed by silt fall to the bottom and soon cover and kill the smaller fauna used by fish for food; by *killing*—that part of the oil that is water soluble contains toxic material that kills fish and fish food; by *trapping*—there have been accounts of ducks, geese and other waterfowl becoming so mired in oil slicks that they could not fly.

Many investigators blame the water soluble fractions of oil as giving some fish that "kerosene taste". This disagreeable oily taste can be intensified if the fish has eaten aquatic organisms that were partially covered by oil-laden silt particles. It has been found that oil carried to the bottom also imparts such a foul taste to oysters that sometimes the oysters from whole reefs are not marketable.

FISHING FUNDAMENTALS

(Continued from Page 17)

of "improvement" will restore good habitat so long as the water is polluted by industrial or domestic wastes.

LAKE IMPROVEMENT

Numerous attempts have been made to improve habitats in lakes, by use of such "devices" as brush shelters, spawning beds, planting of aquatic weed beds, fertilizing, etc. Some have been helpful; some haven't.

Brush shelters do attract young fish. But, all too often, the fish which find shelter there are species



such as sunfishes and perch, which tend to be overabundant and stunted. The value of sheltering young fish is subject to question. But big fish of some species (such as black crappie) are attracted to the vicinity making possible a greater harvest of these fish. In big waters particularly, only small percentages of these fish are harvested. Here, concentrating them to simplify their capture is a good conservation measure.

We once believed that weed beds in lakes and ponds were vital to fish life. This observation was erroneous. Today, farm pond specialists don't want coarse aquatic vegetation in ponds. Too, large TVA storage reservoirs have produced good supplies of fish without aquatic "weeds."

From the standpoint of fish production, weed beds in general may do more harm than good. They protect the young pan fish from their predators and thereby cause overpopulation. But, in all except small lakes, weed beds (unless too abundant) help decidedly in harvesting the adult fish. The weed beds tend to concentrate the catchable fish, so that anglers can take more of them.

Overabundance of vegetation is a major problem in some waters. Fertilizer has been used effectively for weed control in some instances, and certain herbicides have also been used extensively. There's still no simple, universal method for control of overabundant aquatic vegetation.

Gravel spawning beds for bass have been placed in some waters. There's proof that fish use them,

but we still know of no concrete evidence to prove that introduction of spawning beds has increased the bass population.

Fertilizing with commercial fertilizer has greatly increased the fish crop in ponds in some areas, especially in Alabama. Elsewhere it has been of questionable value. For example, here's a paragraph from an article in a recent issue of the OHIO CONSERVATION BULLETIN:

"You hear a lot today about adding commercial fertilizer to farm ponds. As far as fish production is concerned in Ohio, you can forget about it at present. As already stated, the main problem with most ponds is that they are overpopulated. This is an indication that the ponds are already fertile enough to produce more fish than are harvested."

Water-level management offers a number of possibilities, such as raising the level to provide better marshy border for northern pike spawning, or lowering the level for a period to permit land vegetation to grow on the temporarily exposed shoal.

There are other lake improvement possibilities, such as adding lime to over-acid waters, or pumping nutrient materials from the deep bottom (where they are of little value) onto the food producing shoal areas (where they are valuable), or removing ice cover to prevent winter-kill.

Like stream improvement, lake improvement offers definite possibilities. And, like stream improvement, it has definite limitations.

IN GENERAL

Various habitat improvement devices and manipulations have a definite place in fish management, but the important fish habitat improvement problem is one of general land use. With the limited funds available for fish work, the fishery workers can't be-



gin to restore the watersheds. The problem is far too big, and too costly.

But, watershed improvement is progressing rapidly. The improvement is needed for other reasons.

Farmers must keep their all-important topsoil on their land. It's their life-blood. Too, they must manage their land to permit a considerable amount of

rain-water in-soak, so the plants will have water in the long periods between rains.

Over-grazing hurts the rangeland and pasture—it reduces future carrying capacity.

Forest fires destroy future timber values—as well as harming fishing.

Pollution abatement is needed because of other water uses—recreation, drinking water, and the growing need for large amounts of clean water for certain industries.

Because of the increasing improvement in the use of our soil, water, and forest resources, we can expect a gradual improvement in our fish habitat.

There's another relationship between wise use of these resources and fishing. Without our high standard of living, maintainable only by the future wise use of these resources, there wouldn't be sport fishing. Hungry people don't fish for fun. They seek food, not relaxation.

In general, the use of artificial devices in the water will benefit the fish habitat in some instances. Better use of the watershed and its resources will benefit the fish habitat in most instances. Though it might seem far-fetched at first thought, our soil conservation programs, forest fire prevention programs, etc., are all-important to the quality of your fishing.

Alligator Gar



—Photo by Britt

Guilty or not guilty? Friend or foe? Watch for a story on this fellow in a future issue of the CONSERVATIONIST by Biologist Victor W. Lambou of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission.



The Commission's radio communications system will be complete by January 1, 1956 and at this writing is well underway with 50 mobile units in operation, plus seven of the 23 towers and nine boats. Four airplanes are also in service, sending out messages coast-wide—to cars, boats and camps in the marsh. The radio engineer tells us that this will save five cents per mile on autos, cut down the telephone expenses and keep the entire Commission personnel in touch on an around-the-clock schedule, especially enforcement, which has made several major arrests using the two-way system. Even walkie-talkies are in service to aid the field men.

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Outdoor Writers of Louisiana will hold their quarterly session at Pass-a-Loutre November 19 and 20 . . . the place where this group was reorganized two years ago. These boys have been doing a better than fair job of keeping the Louisiana citizenry informed of the recreational opportunities available in this state. In addition, they have encouraged youth education as a means of insuring future gunning and angling opportunities in the generations to come. Who caught how many fish is important, locally; but who's doing what to insure the fishing future is more important, we think. Hurley Campbell of Baton Rouge is president, while Gwen Perkins, now of Natalbany, is secretary.

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There's nothing like opening day—on any species . . . and November 5 is no exception. With another 10 percent increase on the breeding grounds, Louisiana duck shooters should have more than a fair opportunity to kill the limit as many days as they can go afield this year. The big ducks, mostly mallards, started coming in back in mid-October, and the geese flew in the latter part of the month—especially during the full-moon period just passed. The full moon business is tradition and the truth, a fact expounded upon

by old-timers especially. Many of the old-time sayings are true. Here's one you won't believe:

Dig a post-hole during the moon's increase and you'll have too much dirt to place around the post. The situation is reversed during a decrease of the moon. Wanna bet? The moon governs just about everything but hunters and fishermen, and they're a different breed; however, the moon does govern their chances of catch and kill, and postholes, too.

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Deer hunters will go forth on November 11 in south Louisiana, while the boys in the northern half will start a little later—December 1. A word to the already cautious: Watch those camp and "warming" fires. You'll be accused of starting blazes, but just let it be a falsehood as in the past. Don't be guilty. You don't want to burn yourself out of a place to hunt and destroy life, limb and property in doing it. Carelessness, not hunters, start fires, so be a careful hunter . . . we're on your side every day of the year.

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Beagles are taking the country by storm. They're good hunting dogs and excellent companions the year round, for two things, and thirdly, they don't eat as much as the bigger hounds. Speaking of dogs, did you know that the dog food bill in the U.S. is bigger than the sum paid for all the spectator sports combined?

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Let's not forget the fishing during this hunting rush. The big ones are down deep during the cool autumn days. Dig out that big Hawaiian Wiggler, that Hell Diver, or the twin-Shannon and drop it down to the bottom with a slow retrieve. A skilful of fish helps out the pork-and-beans menu on any hunting trip.

And 'til the fishing gets poorer, I'll see you upstream.
—J.B.



"Fuzzy," the American Egret, was caught in the act—of being hatched—by Photographer Jack Britt.